



# ABN E-NEWS

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November 2014

Volume 1, Number 4

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## ABN Takes Action on Hormone Pellet Insertion N. Genell Lee, MSN, RN, JD

As you know, the Board of Nursing investigated the practice of Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNPs) and Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) inserting hormone pellets. In addition to review of reports of safety issues, the Board reached out to Dr. Richard Blackwell, Professor of OB-GYN at UAB, to learn the current recommendations from national organizations as well his personal experience with seeing patients with complications.

Dr. Blackwell recently completed a video outlining the issues and we posted that on the Board's website and sent an email that it was available. If you want to better understand the Board's decision, please review the video for Dr. Blackwell's presentation. One of the Board's values is making evidence-based decisions. Patient safety is the foundation of the Board's role in regulating nursing practice. **Based on the best available evidence, the Board decided that hormone pellet prescribing and insertion is not within the scope of practice of CRNPs or CNMs.**

The decision does not change any prior decisions about contraceptive implants. While the emails and calls we received focused on the procedure itself, the results of the hormone pellets on the patients is the reason for the Board's decision.

We also received comments about the Board of Medical Examiners (ALBME) allowing Physician's Assistants to continue the practice. While the practice of a PA is similar to that of a CRNP, the BME governs that practice. The information provided by Dr. Blackwell is well-grounded not only in the science of hormones but in the patient safety issues. The ALBME announced in its most recent newsletter that it presently is conducting a review of the use of hormone pellet therapy.

We attempted to notify each individual CRNP and CNM who requested approval for the procedure to immediately stop performing the procedure. We found out that there were individuals performing the procedure who never requested or obtained approval. This is not the equivalent of contraceptive implants and no one should have performed the procedure without approval to do so.

You may disagree with the Board's decision and feel free to express your opinion in that regard. However, patient safety is paramount and the Board's decision is based on the best available evidence related to patient safety. Thank you and don't hesitate to let Charlene Cotton, Peggy Benson, or me know if you have questions or comments.

# Collaborative Practice Update

We posted an October update on the ABN website under the Advanced Practice tab. The update outlines the process for requesting Specialty Protocol and additional skills. Please visit the ABN website, [www.abn.alabama.gov](http://www.abn.alabama.gov), for more details related to documentation and application requirements.

## Melissa Hatter Joins Joint Committee

ABN recently named Melissa Hatter, CNM, MSN, RN, of Montgomery, to serve on the Joint Committee for Advanced Practice Nursing. The Joint Committee is comprised of three nurses and three physicians and is responsible for making policy and practice recommendations relating to collaborative practice between Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNPs) and Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) to ABN and to the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners.

Ms. Hatter's term runs from October 1, 2014, to September 30, 2017. She joins Grace Grau, CRNP, MSN, and Carol Stewart, CRNP, MSN, as ABN's appointees to the Joint Committee. Ms. Grau's term is set to expire on September 30, 2015, while Ms. Stewart's term expires September 30, 2016.

## A Practical Guide to the ABN Administrative Code Peggy Benson, RN, MSHA, MSN, NE-BC

The ABN Administrative Code contains rules and regulations adopted by the Alabama Board of Nursing and provides for implementation of the Alabama Nurse Practice Act. This information is available to you on the ABN website, [www.abn.alabama.gov](http://www.abn.alabama.gov), and may be accessed 24 hours a day. As a nurse, you are accountable for your personal knowledge and understanding of the laws and regulations governing nursing practice.

The ABN Administrative Code consists of 13 distinct chapters which make up the rules and regulations for nursing practice and nursing education. We encourage you to review the rules and regulations as often as necessary to become familiar with each chapter. The rules are there to assist you with understanding licensure requirements, education, and standards of practice.

As an example, if you wanted to review a particular chapter, such as the "Disciplinary Action" section of the ABN Administrative Code, you would find it located in Chapter 8. The chapter is listed as Chapter 610-X-8 on the ABN website.

To access the Disciplinary chapter, go to the ABN website and click on "Laws;" then select "Alabama Administrative Code." To open the chapter, select Chapter 610-X-8 on the left side of the screen. You may then download the full chapter in PDF format for review as necessary. The steps are outlined below:

**Step One: Go to the ABN website - [www.abn.alabama.gov](http://www.abn.alabama.gov)**

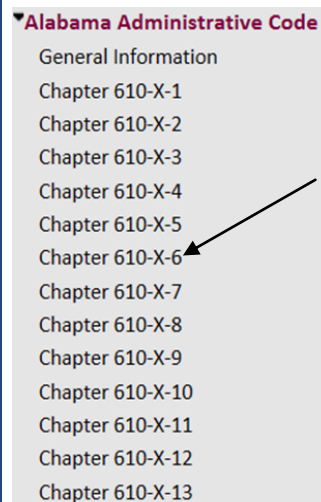
**Step Two: Click on "Laws."**



**Step Three: Click on "Alabama Administrative Code."**



**Step Four: Select a chapter for review.**



**Step Five: Click on "Download this chapter."**



610-X-8-.01	Definitions
610-X-8-.02	Grounds for Denial of an Initial License
610-X-8-.03	Grounds for Discipline of a License or Denial of Renewal or Reinstatement
610-X-8-.04	Investigation
610-X-8-.05	Action Following Investigation
610-X-8-.06	Administrative Procedure Act
610-X-8-.07	Formal Disposition of Contested Cases
610-X-8-.08	Informal Disposition of Contested Cases
610-X-8-.09	Decisions of the Board
610-X-8-.10	Application Following Denial of Licensure
610-X-8-.11	Reinstatement of a Revoked License
610-X-8-.12	Reinstatement of a Board Lapsed License

# RN RENEWAL REMINDER

As you know, RN Renewal began September 1 and ends November 30, with the Late Renewal period running from December 1-31. ALL RN LICENSES EXPIRE AT 12:00 AM ON JANUARY 1, 2015. Late Renewal incurs an additional \$150 charge\*, so we encourage you to renew as soon as possible in order to avoid this unnecessary expense.

A number of issues may need to be addressed to make certain that you meet all conditions for renewal, including:

## 1) **Citizenship/Legal Presence**

**Verification:** Alabama law now requires us to verify that you are present in the state legally. Visit [www.abn.alabama.gov](http://www.abn.alabama.gov), fill out the citizenship checklist, and provide us with the documentation required.

## 2) **Continuing Education (CE):**

You are required to complete 24 hours over the course of the two year license period (hours are prorated for new licensees renewing for the first time). You can verify your CE on the ABN website under your Individual CE Record.

## 3) **Unpaid Fines and/or Fees:**

If you incurred fines or fees over the course of the license period, you will not be able to renew until these have been paid.

**\*Note:** Regular Renewal (by November 30) requires payment of \$75.00 for the license, as well as a \$3.50 transaction fee.

## ABN Departmental Focus

*ABN Focus is a multi-part series covering the structure and various functions of the Alabama Board of Nursing. In this issue, we offer an overview of the Operations Division.*

The Alabama Board of Nursing's Operations Division consists of two sections—Finance and Operations. Each section is managed by a Division Director.

The Division Director for Finance is the Board's Chief Fiscal Officer. This position is responsible for managing the Board's financial operations, including receipt and deposit of all monies paid to the Board, paying the agency's bills, and maintaining and presenting financial statements, as well as managing the Board's annual budget.

The Finance section also manages the Board's annual graduate scholarship program, which includes receiving and processing scholarship applications and disbursing funds to awardees. The scholarship program is dependent on an annual appropriation from the Alabama Legislature, which in recent years has provided approximately \$166,000 in funding. The amount of individual scholarship awards in any given year is based on the number of qualified applications received, as determined through a thorough blind-review process conducted by a committee composed of members of the ABN staff.

The Operations section is managed by the Director of Administrative Services. In addition to supervising employees, the Division Director serves as the Board's Records Officer and is responsible for determining, pursuant to the agency's Records Disposition Authority, which records the Board must maintain and which may be discarded.

The Operations section is critical to the Board's mission, as it bears responsibility for day to day functions of the agency. Principal among these functions is the section's role as human resources and property management for the agency. The Operations section maintains all personnel, payroll, and property records for the Board. ABN enjoys a stellar 100% compliant record for property audits as a result of the efforts of the Operations section.

Finally, the Operations section often serves as the agency's first personal interface with licensees and the public. This includes not only managing reception, but also the Call Center, which offers callers friendly, helpful access to the various divisions and resources of the Board.

### \*\*\*Ebola Links\*\*\*

Alabama's nurses are rightly concerned about the recent news that the Ebola virus has been transmitted to caregivers on US soil. For your information, the Alabama Department of Public Health has established a webpage related to Ebola at <http://www.adph.org/ebola/>,

Additionally, you may find the following links from the American Academy of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) helpful:

[CDC Information for Healthcare Providers](#)

[CDC Emergency Response Facebook Page](#)

[Questions and Answers on Ebola](#)

[Preparing for Ebola: What U.S. Hospitals Can Learn From Emory Healthcare and Nebraska Medical Center](#)

[Facts about Ebola](#)

[Tools for Protecting Health Care Personnel](#)

[Checklist for Patients Being Evaluated for Ebola](#)

[Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations](#)

[Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology \(APIC\)](#)

### ABN Complaint Log

*A quarterly feature focusing on common complaints against nurses.*

#### What You Say Reflects On You as a Licensee Honor L. Ingels

Each year, ABN receives a disturbing number of reports from county and municipal law enforcement agencies relating to casual threats experienced during routine traffic stops involving our licensees. As with other disciplinary issues such as substance use and practice violations, the overwhelming majority of members of the nursing community would rightly be appalled by this behavior, but we all should be mindful that it occurs.

Take as an example a statement such as, "you better hope you don't end up in my emergency department," or perhaps even more sinister, "I practice anesthesia and you better hope you don't end up on my table in the operating room---if you want to wake up." I cannot fathom what the licensee hopes to accomplish when he or she offers such a senseless and unnecessary comment, but we all need to be mindful of the things we say and take care to avoid implicating our professional lives in weak moments such as the ones described above.

Law enforcement officials have a demanding job that often involves very real risks to life and limb in the ordinary course of their efforts to protect the public from criminal behavior. You need to be aware that they should and do take threats very seriously. You may see it as an offhand comment, but, from the perspective of law enforcement personnel, life may very well depend on assuming that any threat is real and serious. These are men and women who go to work each day knowing that they very well could end up on your operating table or in your emergency department.

So, you will probably find yourself reported to the Board by law enforcement as a professional acting in a very unprofessional manner. You can rest assured that the Board takes this kind of behavior very seriously and will act accordingly. This is clear and undeniable Unprofessional Conduct that has real implications for your license and ability legally to practice nursing.

Again, like nurses, law enforcement officers are professionals who have a difficult, dangerous, and often thankless job in service to the greater public good. When you encounter them in your personal life as they go about the duties they're assigned, try and take a moment and put yourself in their shoes. Your choice either to say something rash or to calm down and hold your tongue makes a difference not only in how safe and secure the officer feels doing his or her job, but also in whether or not you personally are competent and professional enough to do yours.